

*April 21, 2004*

1792

EA OR-120-04-05

**Decision Documentation  
For  
Down Log Relocation Projects  
EA OR120-04-05**

**Background:**

The Coos Bay District Bureau of Land Management, using input from District Resource staff and public input, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (**EA**) and Finding of No Significant Impact (**FONSI**) for the Down Log Relocation Projects. There is a No Action Alternative and a Proposed Action Alternative. The Action Alternative proposes to relocate trees that become available from such disturbances as fire, insects, disease, landslides, and windstorms or are hazard trees that pose a threat to public safety or have a high probability of theft. The relocation of these trees would be for the benefit of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

Management objectives are to:

1. Relocate wood that is not available for a Salvage sale and also either poses a threat to public safety, has a high probability of theft, or is in excess to the down wood requirements of the immediate area as described in the District RMP.
2. Increase the coarse wood component in aquatic and terrestrial habitats for the benefit of dependant fish and wildlife species.

**Decision:**

We hereby adopt the Proposed Action of EA OR120-04-05, including the Project Design Features.

Currently, the Coos Bay District BLM is re-consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding disturbance and disturbance distances to the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet for a variety of forest management projects. Relocation of down wood typically meets criteria for low disturbance projects and the recommendations in the BO will be applied to projects developed in this EA. The recommendations for seasonal restrictions in the forthcoming BO are hereby incorporated as design features by reference.

On October 18, 2002, the Coos Bay District Bureau of Land Management received a Programmatic Biological Opinion (2002/00879) covering certain “not likely to adversely

effect” and “likely to adversely effect” actions from NOAA Fisheries. Fisheries restoration projects, such as inputting large wood into streams, are included in this document. Implementing these projects would not cause adverse effects to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). No further consultation with NOAA Fisheries is required at this time.

**Rationale:**

The Proposed Action is the alternative that most closely meets the intent of the ROD for the Northwest Forest Plan by restoring desired aquatic and terrestrial habitat conditions across the landscape. The decision is consistent with the RODs for the *Northwest Forest Plan and the Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement* as supplemented and amended. The Proposed Action is consistent with the Riparian Reserve Standards and Guidelines of the Northwest Forest Plan, consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, and will contribute to restoring the fifth-field watersheds of the project area over the long term.

The existing condition of the Riparian Reserves in respect to down wood amounts has suffered negative impacts from past land management practices. These include removal of stream side trees through logging, “stream cleaning” practice of removing large wood stream structures for better fish passage, general removal of down logs across the landscape through salvaging, and illegal firewood cutting. These practices have resulted in the loss of streamside vegetation and function, habitat loss in the decreased amount of large logs in streams, loss of deep pools and channel form, increased water temperatures, and decreased water flows and quality. As stated in the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watershed, “Large wood placements temporarily address habitat deficiencies caused by past land management activities until wood can be recruited to the stream naturally from adjacent riparian and upslope areas” (p. 6, Watershed Restoration Inventory). Currently, only 39% of District lands within 200 feet of streams are capable of inputting wood of the size needed to influence aquatic habitat quality.

The Proposed Action would increase the coarse wood component in aquatic and terrestrial habitats for the benefit of dependent fish and wildlife species. The District’s Watershed Analysis documents typically recommend that Reserve lands (i.e. LSRs, Riparian Reserves, Administrative Withdrawals, and Congressional Withdrawals) be managed to provide down logs at levels within the range of natural variability of unmanaged stands. Many of the District’s Watershed Analyses identify current deficiencies of down logs and recommend log creation projects to restore these key habitat elements to the landscape.

**Administrative Remedies:**

This Record of Decision is protestable for a period of 30 days from the signing date (43 CFR Part 4, Administrative Remedies.)

**Decision Recommended by:**

\_\_\_\_/s/Richard Conrad\_\_\_\_\_April 20, 2004\_\_\_\_  
Rich Conrad  
Myrtlewood Field Manager                      Date

/s/\_\_\_\_M. Elaine Raper\_\_\_\_\_ April 20, 2004\_\_\_\_\_  
M. Elaine Raper  
Umpqua Field Manager                      Date

**Decision Approved by:**

\_\_\_\_/s/Sue E. Richardson      \_\_\_\_ April 20, 2004 \_\_\_\_  
Sue E. Richardson                      Date  
District Manager